

WALLY MILLS - Sydney Division

Through his energy and persistence Walter (Wally) Mills arranged the conservation of the rock bolting development site in Lambie Gorge, Cooma, and brought to attention the achievements of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Authority (SMHEA) in developing modern rock bolting practice.

Wally is an electrical engineer who spent his career with SMHEA and its successor. As a member of the Cooma Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee Wally was involved with obtaining a grant to create a walking track and viewing platforms in Lambie Gorge, an Aboriginal site. In about 2003 while undertaking clearing, the site was discovered where some 50 years before 'The Snowy' had conducted installation and pull-out tests to study setting torque, anchorage behaviour and bolt strength on rock bolts.

Recognising the significance of the site, Wally undertook considerable research into rock bolting practice including interviews of ex-Snowy personnel who had been engaged in the work.

Wally gathered a team to assist him and submitted a nomination to the NSW Heritage Council to list the site on the State Heritage Register. A nomination was also made to Engineering Heritage Australia for the site to be declared a National Engineering Heritage Landmark. That award was presented in October 2009 at a ceremony during the 60th anniversary celebrations of the commencement of the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

Wally presented the rock bolting story at a number of public talks and collated this material into a small booklet, *The Snowy Men Behind Tunnel Rock Bolting* which is an important addition to the literature.

The Snowy's rock bolting techniques saved millions of dollars in construction of the Scheme, they speeded up work, vastly increased safety in underground excavation and were rapidly adopted world-wide. Professor Ted Brown described the achievement as "*probably the most significant engineering development made on the Snowy scheme*".

Wally formed and chaired a committee to organise the 60th anniversary celebrations held over six days which attracted over 3000 registrants.

The engineering profession is indebted to Wally Mills for bringing to notice the Snowy's development of modern rock bolting practice and for conserving the site that is symbolic of the work hidden in tunnels and underground caverns.

CHANGE CONTROL

VERSION 1	14 February 2010	362 words	Michael Clarke rewrite
VERSION 2	24 February 2010	378 words	Addition of section on 60 th anniversary celebrations
VERSION 3	3 Mar 2010	354 words	KB changes added
VERSION 4	6 Mar 2010	354 words	Changed 'to' to 'on' para 4 line 2

Suggestion from Michael Clarke
Forwarded to Helen Skat 6/3

